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*Eat, Pray, Love* Essay

September 1, 2010

The Augusteum

Over the years, Octavian Augustus’s mausoleum, the Augusteum, has transformed about seven times! (Gilbert) The Augusteum was built by Emperor Octavian Augustus sometime in the eleventh century for a resting place for him and his family forever. It is located in Rome, Italy. As Elizabeth Gilbert said in her book, *Eat, Pray, Love*, the mausoleum started as “a big, round, ruined pile of brick.” In pictures, it looks as if the ground has grown around it over time leaving just the entrance, almost as if it was originally built underground. The Augusteum originally housed Octavian Augustus’ remains, but in the eighteenth century, Benito Mussolini used it to be a resting place for his remains. (Gilbert)

Again, originally the Augusteum was a resting place for Octavian Augustus; however, during the Dark Ages, the mausoleum fell to ruins. When the twelfth century arrived, the Augusteum had been remodeled for a powerful Colonna family to protect them. After that, the Augusteum was changed into many things: a vineyard, a Renaissance garden, a bullring, a fireworks depository, and a concert hall. As mentioned earlier, the last known renovation was when Benito Mussolini used it to be a resting place for his remains.

The author believes that the Augusteum is like a person that has adjusted to changing times. For example, Gilbert said, “To me, the Augusteum is like a person who’s led a totally crazy life—who maybe started out as a housewife, then unexpectedly became a widow, then took up fan-dancing to make money, ended up somehow as the first female dentist in outer space, and then tried her hand at national politics—yet who has managed to hold an intact sense of herself throughout every upheaval.” That seems like a pretty crazy life, huh? One can see where the author is coming from after the numerous changes, or occupations as the author put it, to the Augusteum.

The Augusteum taught the author that,  
Her life has not actually been *so* chaotic, after all. It is merely this world that is chaotic, bringing changes to us all that nobody could have anticipated. It warns me not to get attached to any obsolete ideas about who I am, what I represent, whom I belong to, or what function I may once have intended to serve.

What everyone can learn is that “yesterday I might have been a glorious monument to somebody, true enough—but tomorrow I could be a fireworks depository.” Only one interpretation should come to mind: “I could be on top of the world today with everything, and in the dumpster tomorrow with nothing.” People get too high on themselves and need to be brought down a couple of notches.

The Augusteum teaches one about life. No one should take his or her life for granted. The main purpose of this particular part of the book is to remind people not to get too big of egos. The author did a great job of bringing that up in her book, *Eat, Pray, Love*. In the small town life, people are pretty good about remembering who they are. Although, there are instances where a person gets too cocky or thinks he/she is high and mighty.